

Message Text

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FM AMEMBASSY KUWAIT

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9365

INFO AMEMBASSY ABU DHABI

AMEMBASSY JIDDA

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY VANAMA

AMEMBASSY ROME

AMEMBASSY TEHRAN

S E C R E T KUWAIT 1573

EO 11652: GDS

TAGS: QA, PFOR, KU

SUBJ: RULER OF QATAR ON GULF AFFAIRS

1. DURING CALL ON QATARI RULER SHAIKH KHALIFA IN DOHA APRIL 18 I TOLD HIM I ALWAYS HAD CONSIDERED HIM MOST ARDENT AND EFFECTIVE ADVOCATE OF UNITY AMONG LOWER GULF STATES. HAD THERE, IN HIS OPINION, BEEN ANY PROGRESS TOWARD UNITY DURING PAST COUPLE OF YEARS? AND WHAT WAS THE OUTLOOK?

2. KHALIFA REPLIED HE APPRECIATED MY KIND WORDS. SOME PROGRESS HAD BEEN MADE IN TERMS OF UNDERSTANDING ON PART MOST LOWER GULF LEADERS THAT CLOSER RELATIONS BETWEEN THEM VITAL TO FUTURE INDEPENDENCE, STABILITY AND DEVELOPMENT OF THEIR COUNTRIES. HOWEVER, MATERIAL PROGRESS TOWARD UNITY PAINFULLY SLOW -- FAR BEHIND WHAT IT SHOULD BE BY NOW. ON ONE OF HIS FAVORITE SUBJECTS -- PRESIDENT OF UAE SHAIKH ZAYID -- HE OBSERVED ZAYID ACTIVE AND ENTHUSIASTIC RULER BUT PREOCCUPIED HIMSELF WITH HIS PASSION FOR WATER AND AGRICULTURE TO EXCLUSION OF WHOLE RANGE OF OTHER PRIORITY INTERNAL AND FOREIGN AFFAIRS ISSUES.

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3. KHALIFA ALSO ATTACKED KUWAITI LEADERSHIP FOR STATEMENTS OVER

PAST YEAR CRITICAL OF UNITED STATES. WHAT WAS TO BE GAINED, HE ASKED, BY ISSUING STATEMENTS AGAINST GREAT POWER WHICH HAD PARALLEL INTERESTS AND CONCERNS AND WHOSE FRIENDSHIP WOULD CONTINUE TO BE NEEDED BY WHOLE AREA FAR INTO FUTURE? INTERESTINGLY, KHALIFA MENTIONED HIS PERSONAL REGARD FOR SHAIKH JABER AL-ALI, PROMINENT MEMBER OF RULING KUWAITI FAMILY AND FORMER MINISTER OF INFORMATION. (NOTE: JABER AL-ALI HAS BEEN OUT OF GOVERNMENT FOR SOME THREE TO FOUR YEARS, LARGELY BECAUSE OF HIS RIVALRY WITH CROWN PRINCE/ PM JABER AL-AHMAD WHO DOES NOT SHARE HIS STRONGLY HELD CONSERVATIVE VIEWS ON HOW TO RUN COUNTRY). KHALIFA ALSO CRITICIZED KUWAITI EXPENDITURES OF LARGE SUMS ABROAD FOR POLITICAL PURPOSES. "ONE SHOULD GIVE ANOTHER MAN ONLY WHAT IS CLEARLY HIS DUE", KHALIFA SAID, "BUT NEVER MORE THAN THAT. TO GIVE TOO MUCH IS TO OPEN ONESELF TO FURTHER DEMANDS THAT CANNOT BE CONTROLLED."

4. COMMENT: IN MY VIEW SHAIKH KHALIFA REMAINS MOST DEDICATED AND SENSIBLE RULER IN GULF. UNDER HIS LEADERSHIP QATAR, WITH ITS RELATIVELY MODERATE BUT SIGNIFICANT OIL INCOME, IS IN MANY WAYS A MODEL OF CAREFULLY PLANNED DEVELOPMENT. QATAR CLEARLY MERITS GREATER ATTENTION IN FUTURE THAN USG AND AMERICAN PRIVATE ENTERPRISE AND TECHNOLOGY HAVE PAID TI SO FAR IN ITS SHORT HISTORY AS INDEPENDENT STATE.
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